



2 Cor. 5:18

Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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Obsessed With Glory

David Clayton



TROUBLING ACCUSATIONS

Richard Dawkins is probably one of the most well known atheists in the world at the moment. This is probably due to the fact that he is very aggressive with his atheistic beliefs and quite critical of Christians and their God. He has written a book which is entitled ‘*The God Delusion*,’ In in which he says,

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction. Jealous and proud of it, a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak, a vindictive, blood thirsty ethnic cleanser, a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. - Richard Dawkins

This man portrays an extremely negative image of God. Among other things he accuses him of being ‘jealous and proud of it’. At first glance there seems to be some truth in this statement for if we go to the Bible we see that God does

say,

. . . . I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (Exod 20:5)

Dawkins goes on to say that God is petty, which means that He makes an unnecessary fuss about small, insignificant things. Again, when we look at the Old Testament, we could be justified in thinking that there is some truth in this. God says that a man picking up sticks on the Sabbath has to die, Moses makes a mistake and says to God, “I am sorry, please let me go over to the Promised Land”, but God says, “You made a mistake, you disobeyed me, so you have to die.” So, there are places where we can find reasons to seemingly justify Dawkins’ views. These are stories contained in the records of the Old Testament, and we cannot deny that they are in the Bible.

Most of us reading this article may not have a challenge understanding or explaining these incidents which Dawkins apparently understands so poorly. Nevertheless for some people these are very troubling issues. Why was God like this? Why did He do these things? One of the things we have to do is take each statement and show why these things were necessary, while not being the true reflection of what God is really like.

WORLDLY GLORY

Today I want to focus particularly on Dawkins’ description of God as being, ‘megalomaniacal’. A megalomaniac is

somebody who is obsessed with himself and has a compelling desire for power and control. It is important to deal with this question because there are still many, even among Christians, who believe that God’s true nature is that He is obsessed with Himself, with His own power and that he is consumed by a desire to control others. So, the question is, is this true?

God speaks a lot about his glory, and that is what I want to center my thoughts around. There is a verse in Habakkuk 2:14 that says:

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

This is not the only place where God says this, and when you look at the times in the Bible where he talks about His glory, there is no doubt it is a major theme. You can see that it is something that He is really concerned about and focused on.

If we think of this word, ‘glory’, in terms of how this word is commonly understood, the people who come most readily to mind are those of prominence who represent great power, authority and influence. People such as movie stars, sporting heroes, dominant political heads of state - these are the ones who are glorified and lifted up. When I was a teacher, every morning there

Also in this issue:

- Christ or Angels?.....6
- Your Circadian Rhythm.....10
- Christian Unity.....11

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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would be a general assembly and there would always be a little motivational talk by the Principal or a member of staff. This was a tradition in schools from the time I was a child until I became a teacher myself. One of the things that I heard highlighted over and over again by these teachers in their efforts to motivate the students to diligence in their studies was, "who knows, if you do well, one day one of you could become Prime Minister of this country!" The greatest achievement one could accomplish in their eyes, was that one could become the Prime Minister! Of course, sometimes they would talk about becoming a doctor or a lawyer, or they would hold up one of these professions that people look up to and say, "you can become one of them." But the pinnacle was, to one day become Prime Minister. This was always interesting to me because I was one of those who had absolutely no desire to ever be Prime Minister. Maybe it was something God put in me, or I was born that way because I never had the intention or the desire to rule other people or to sit upon the high seat.

So the point is, this is what glory means in the eyes of the world. When they talk about the great men of history, they will mention people like the Roman Caesars, the great Chinese conquerors or Napoleon etc. These men were warriors who conquered vast portions of the world and made a mark in history. If you're a Christian you think of people like Moses, who led Israel out of captivity, parted the Red Sea and did many mighty deeds. These concepts are locked into our minds when we talk about glory.

One interesting thing that I read many years ago, was that an Adventist minister, Roy Allen Anderson, went to Roman Catholic assembly in Rome, referred to as "Vatican two". This was a meeting of the Catholic Church where there were supposedly many great changes in their teachings. When this minister returned from Rome, one of the things he said was, 'nobody will ever believe that I sat so close to his holiness.' He was gloating and raving about how amazing it was to sit so close to the Pope, and added that he had come to see how wonderful the Roman Catholic Christians were. He said, 'oh what we have been doing, brothers and sisters, stomping these beautiful brethren with the mark of the beast. What a crime we have been committing!' He was, at the time, the editor of the Ministry Magazine and clearly, he had been smitten by the "glory" and pomp of the Church of Rome and its head, the Pope.

The point I am making is that, in the world, people tend to be impressed by fanfare and noise and display. These are the things that are admired in this world. I will never forget in the 1960's when I first heard Cassius Clay, who later became Mohammad Ali. My father used to listen to boxing on the radio, and sometimes I would listen as well. I remember the night when Ali beat Sonny Liston, nobody expected him to do so, but he completely surprised the world. But on the radio you could hear him shouting, "I am the greatest, I am the best, nobody was ever as great as me." Even as a boy, it rubbed me the wrong way to hear somebody so ob-

essed with himself and everybody in the world hated Cassius Clay at that time for his arrogance, his self-centred behaviour and his vanity. Of course, as time passed, and he began to back up his words by winning fight after fight, they got to realize that it wasn't so much that he was so obsessed with himself, but rather that it was a gimmick. So, they began to accept and admire him. But I'll never forget when he first jumped up and began to say these words, how it irked people.

We never like people who are too focused on themselves. This is one of the reasons why a lot of people despised Donald Trump when he ran for, and became President of the USA. I will beat the devil and give him his due, and I think that there were some things that Trump stood for that were good. But of course the thing that we found most repulsive about Trump, was his obsession with himself. Everything that he did, he claimed nobody had ever done this as well before. He was obsessed with himself, with glorifying himself and putting himself above everybody else. One of the amazing things about him was how he could speak so smoothly and casually about how much greater he was than everybody else. The greatest Presidency, the greatest success. He was always glorifying himself.

GOD'S OBSESSION

The popular idea of glory is that it emphasizes superiority over others. You are stronger, you are smarter, you have more money, you are more influential. In this world the glory of a person is in these things. This is why when we go to God and see certain kinds of statements... like Numbers 14:21, certain questions arise. This is God talking to Moses, and He says:

But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. (Num 14:21)

God seems obsessed with His glory, I am not going to deny this. In Isaiah 42:8 God says:

I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

(Isa 42:8)

So, God is not only obsessed with his glory, but he doesn't want anybody else to share it. He declares, I am unique, I am special, my glory is not to be shared. I suppose somebody might say, well God has the right to be self-centred, because He is Yahweh; he is the self-existent one and He is the only one in the universe who is Almighty. Everybody else depends on somebody else so, what have we to glory in? There is nothing we possess which we did not receive. I am acutely aware of this, and I think everyone who understands righteousness by faith understands the same thing. Every day that we wake up we are thankful that God has preserved us, because we know that it is the grace of God that we are alive, we know it is his grace that has kept us and turned us around so that we did not become the worst kinds of reprobates. We have nothing in ourselves in which we can glory.

God is above receiving anything because He gave everything! He is Yahweh, The Self-Existent one. So, even from that perspective you could say, God has a right to be self-centered, as He is the only one who exists in and of Himself. At the same time, it still leaves a little sour taste in the mouth to think of God as an egotist. Even though He has the right to be self-centered, He still seems obsessed with himself. He still likes to receive praise, and He likes nice things to be said about Him. When we look at it from the point of view of the motives of human beings, it still leaves a slightly unpleasant taste in the mouth. So, I want to focus a little more closely on this question of glory. Because I think that is where the real answer to this problem lies. I am presenting it as a problem because whatever defaces the image of God, whatever gives Him a bad name is a problem.

AN INCORRECT CONCEPT OF GLORY

Nowadays, one of the popular fads is for people to place tattoos on prominent places on their bodies. It seems to be a desire to take on some distinctive feature that makes them feel they are not

in the same category as others. This is the idea that human beings have when they think of their glory; "I am richer. I have more possessions than you. I have greater abilities". In the sporting world, they worship Usain Bolt, the fastest man alive they worship Lionel Messi, the most skillful soccer player. In American basketball they worship Lebron James and others. These are the people that they elevate in the world because they are better at what they do than other people.

These concepts of what it means to be great, are so pervasive in human thinking that they are embedded in our psyche. Automatically, when we hear the word 'glory' or the word 'great', this is what comes to our minds. The Bible says in Genesis 1:26 that God made man in his image. But I have heard it said that man tends to make God in his image and there is some truth to this. People tend to think of God in terms of the way they themselves think and value things. So, when somebody says that God is rich, they think of this in terms of money, and possessions. "The world is mine," says the Lord, "and the cattle upon a thousand hills, all the gold is mine and all the silver is mine." They think of material things. When they think of His greatness, they think of his power to incinerate you into ashes with a bolt of lightning, they think of his ability to part the sea with his word. When they say God is great, they think that he can stand taller, walk bigger, exist on a higher plane than anybody else. And it is true that, to some extent, this picture is portrayed in the Bible.

Some of the words that we use to refer to God strongly bring out this idea. For example, God is the only person who we can truthfully refer to as 'The Lord of the Omnis... He is omnipresent, (He is everywhere) omniscient, (He knows everything) and He is omnipotent (He is all powerful). These ideas are so powerfully associated with God that many times, when we think about Him, this is all we conceptualize.

One consequence of this is that some

people are terrified of Him. They know He sees everything, He knows everything and can do everything, and that is the only thing they know of Him, and hence they fear Him. I heard a friend tell a story, as a warning to someone, of a man who was a member of the church, and was having an affair with another woman apart from his wife. One Sabbath morning, she said, he was standing at the table at the front (in the Adventist church they often have a smaller table in front of the pulpit where the Sabbath school officials lead out) and out of the clear sky, there came a bolt of lightning which moved through the church door and went right up the church aisle and struck the man dead where he was standing. Apparently, it is a true story. I cannot read behind the scenes and say what happened, and I know a lot of people die from lightning strikes. This one happened to die standing in front of the church on a Sabbath morning, and according to her it was from a clear sky.

When you hear stories like this, you are uncomfortable being near a God who is almighty, who sees everything and can do all things. These are the concepts that are engrained in our minds from childhood concerning God. He seems to be obsessed with it because He says, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of my glory." If this is your understanding of glory, I am not sure you have reason to be comfortable.

But what is God really talking about when he speaks of his glory? In the last message to be given to this world, we find three angels flying in the midst of heaven with a message for all nations, and the first one says with a loud voice,

Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Rev 14:7)

Fear God and give glory to Him... so we know, that our ministry in this end of time is to help everybody on this planet to glorify God. What are we going to be doing? What is our message? Well most of us can adjust that word

fear - it means to respect him, to honor him, for the hour of His judgment has arrived. If we want to know what God wants of us, we can find the answer in this statement. But the important aspect of the verse on which we want to focus, it the emphasis that our duty is to “give glory to him!”

THE TRUE GLORY OF GOD

There are two sides to this issue. First of all, there is a concept which we find emphasized in the Old Testament. In Exodus 16:10 it says,

And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. (Ex 16:10)

This is the concept we find over and over in the Old Testament. What is the glory that appeared in the cloud? What did they see? They saw a cloud, and that cloud was full of blazing light. This is the concept of the glory of the Lord that was predominant in the Old Testament. We see this illustrated again in Exodus 24:16-17.

And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. Ex 24:16-17)

‘The glory of the Lord was like devouring fire.’ We are talking about physical light, a manifestation of power that scared the wits out of the children of Israel. Moses describes this glory as being like devouring fire! So, this is the concept of God’s glory that is stuck in the minds of people. It is perpetuated by the fact that we human beings, when we think of glory and greatness, envision these kinds of things. From comic books to movies, who do they glorify? They glorify superman, batman, the incredible hulk; they glorify people who have superior powers, people who can shoot lightning bolts out of their hands. These are the things which are set up

in this world as heroic.

But when we go to the New Testament, we find something different; in 2 Corinthians 4:6 we find one of the most profound verses in the Bible. I am grateful that the Lord has helped us to turn our eyes to a greater understanding than what we find by looking at the events of the Old Testament. It says,

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:6)

This is God’s final statement as to what his glory really is. Where do we find the true glory of God? Not on Mount



Sinai, not in the parting of the Red Sea, not in the sun standing still in the sky. Where do we find the glory that shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? Where is this glory that God says He will not give to graven images? It is the true glory of God, which we have discovered, “Shining in the face of Jesus Christ.”

In John 1:14, it says,

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

When we saw the Son, we saw the real glory of the Father. He is the express image of the Father. He says, “if you have seen me, you have seen the Father.” God spoke by prophets in time past, such as Moses, who told you about

glory upon the mountain, but in these last days he has spoken by his Son. He has spoken finally, conclusively, permanently and indisputably through his Son.

Do we want to know what really matters about God? Look at the face of Jesus Christ. Look at what we see when we look at the character and the life of Jesus; we see the love, the tender pity, the fellowship, brotherhood and fatherhood of the Almighty, omnipotent God of the universe. And this is the quality that God says, “is my greatest attribute. This is the quality that I want everybody to know and understand. When you think of my glory, I don’t want you to think of Muhammad Ali, or Caesar, or Donald Trump. When you think of my glory, I want you to think of what you see in my son Jesus Christ.

WHY SO OBSESSED?

Why is God so focused on us lifting up his glory? Even though His glory is his goodness, why is he so focused on it? It is because in the glory of God we finally discover the truth about the kind of person that God really is. The most important truth in the universe is the truth about this character of God, this is his glory and this is what we see shining in the face of Jesus Christ. In Luke 19:41,42 we see one of these striking revelations of God’s character which were continually streaming from the face (the life) of Jesus.

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! (Luke 19:41,42)

What is Jesus crying about? He is crying because Jerusalem does not know the things that pertain to her peace. There is something that will give Jerusalem peace and she does not know it, and because of this, He is weeping. This is the heart of God. Why is he crying? What is Jesus obsessed with? What does he want? He wants them to know the things that belong unto their peace. And what are these things? Isaiah 32:17 says,

And the work of righteousness shall

be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. (Isa 32:17)

What was it that belonged to their peace? It was the work of righteousness. And who does the work of righteousness? The only place a person can find righteousness is in God through Christ. They killed the son of God, and they rejected God's manifestation of Himself in his Son; they rejected the things that belonged to their peace. What they actually rejected was the glory of God. Matthew 23:37-38, expresses the same thing. It says,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (Matt 23:37-38)

He is weeping over Jerusalem because he wants to gather her, like a hen gathers her chickens, and they would not. Why would they not? Why is it that people do not turn to God? Why is it that people continually reject God and turn to all kinds of other things instead? Probably because ninety percent of the time, they do not know the kind of person God is. They have a concept of this person, they hear of His power and might, they hear that He is focused on his glory, and they think of Donald Trump and Mohammad Ali. They think of this egotist and that egotist and they think that God is like that! And so He is not really very attractive to them. Even when they think of prayer, they think, "oh I've got to meet all these conditions before he will hear me! I'm going to put it off because serving this person is hard!" They don't know God. They have never seen the glory of God so they cannot find peace, because they will not find Him.

Maybe I meet a person who is starving and in need of help and all I want to do is bless him. But the person is afraid of me because he misunderstands me; he rejects or ignores me when I offer to help him. What is the most important

thing that person needs? He is starving and hungry, and I'm full of good things to give him, but he fears me. What is the greatest lesson which that person needs? He needs to know the truth about me. He needs to know that I love him. He needs to know that I only mean him well.

The point I want to make is that God loves all of us, but because most of the human race is scared of Him and despise Him due to bad misinformation about Him, they think of him as a hard taskmaster, a cold unfeeling ruler who sets up barriers which are difficult to overcome. These people desperately need to be informed and corrected. They have heard of the Old Testament God, and they have perhaps never read the New Testament, or perhaps they read, but don't understand it. And so God says to us His children, "you are my witnesses! You are the ones who know the truth about me!" You and I, brothers and sisters, we are His witnesses. He has created us for His glory, and our message is, "fear God, and give glory to Him!" What are we to say to the world? Let the world know the unspeakable love, and goodness of our Father. Let the world know the truth about Him!

This is the great need of the world, and so God gives it to us! He gives us the responsibility and the privilege of being able to share this message, and there is no truth as great as this. We can talk about all the doctrines that we love to argue about, the millennium, immortality of the soul, The Sanctuary doctrine etc. but nothing is as important as that men should come to know the truth about the God of love. This is the everlasting good news. It is the message of our time and of all times, the message for our world and for all worlds. It's the message above all messages.

God help us to not only understand this so that we can have it seared into our hearts and minds, but that we can understand it so well, that we can share it with others in an effective, powerful way. There are many spokes in a wheel but all of them are locked in at one central place. Similarly, every doctrine

that we study must be centered in this hub, which is, the truth of God seen in the face of Jesus Christ. When we find that there are Christians who are beginning to understand this, you know that the work of God is finally beginning to be finished and understood.

I know that we are concerned about the lack of power among God's people. We want to be able to heal the sick, raise the dead ... but I am realizing more and more that the gifts of God flow out of the relationship with Him, and this relationship is based upon a proper understanding of how He really, truly feels about me.

When I come to the place where there is no shadow between Him and me, when I come to the place where I accept my place in Him and know that I am 100% accepted, and that there was never anything negative in his heart towards me, when I can build on this and have a true relationship with Him, I believe that every gift that He ever intended to give us, will appear in our lives. But we need to look in the right place, not focusing so much on faith, or doctrine or semantics, but focusing on our God.

There is a saying I have heard which goes like this:

I looked at Jesus, and the dove of peace flew into my heart.

I looked at the dove, and it flew away!

I could say, "I looked at God in Jesus and the power of God came into my life. I looked at the wisdom, I looked at the power, I looked at the authority, I looked at the dove and they all flew away." Because we obtain nothing from looking at the gifts. We obtain everything through God in Christ, and nothing outside of Him. So, our purpose and our place in life is to be locked into Him, to love Him so well that we never leave that place and it is our only focus in life. Right there, everything falls into place.



Christ or Angels?



CHRIST IN YOU

One of the greatest truths in the Bible is the truth that God has come to live in his people. This is the very essence of the New Covenant and it is what sets Christianity apart from all other religious beliefs. During Old Testament times God's emphasis was that he would dwell "among" his people.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. (Exod 25:8)

During the transition period between the Old and the New Covenant the Son of God came to dwell with humanity for a short period of time in a physical, bodily form, and during this period God described our state as having, "God with us."

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt 1:23)

But beyond all this, God had a greater experience in store for his people and when Jesus returned to heaven and was glorified, this greater experience came to his people. The apostle Paul describes this amazing experience, the privilege of New Testament believers, in the following words:

... ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (2Cor 6:16)

This was the fulfillment of the promise which God had made hundreds of years before through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel where he had stated that one day he would completely transform the experience of his people so that they would be able to serve him in a way which would be acceptable to him. In Jeremiah, he expressed it as writing his laws on the hearts and minds of his people, while in Ezekiel he described it as putting a new heart and a new spirit in them.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jer 31:33)

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezek 36:26-27)

This is what makes the New Covenant different from the Old Covenant. In the Old Covenant, God's law was not written on the hearts of his people, in the Old Covenant they were not given a new heart and a new spirit, but God promised that one day, this would be their experience. This writing of the law on the hearts of God's people was not simply achieved by memorizing the ten commandments, it was something completely different than anything that anyone had experienced before. In actual fact, this referred to the experience where God's people would have the very mind of God, their thoughts and behavior would be like his, because

he himself and his son would come to live in them. There are many verses in the New Testament which speak of this experience:

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (Col 1:27)

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1John 4:4)

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom 8:9)

This is the essence of what it means to be "born again," and those who have experienced this new birth can testify to the reality of this experience.

TRUTH DENIED

Amazing as it may seem, there are some within the Christian community, even among those who believe in the one true God of the Bible, who have set out to deny and to oppose this truth of the literal indwelling of Christ and the Father, in their people. This denial is not because of lack of evidence in the Bible, there can hardly be anything more clear than the emphasis of Paul and John in the following verses:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2Cor 13:5)

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1John 1:3)

I am not going to try to judge the motives of those who deny this truth, perhaps it is based on certain statements by Ellen White, perhaps it is based on their own personal experience, or lack

of it, or maybe there is some other reason. Whatever the reason, their opposition is diametrically in conflict with very, very clear teachings in the Scriptures.

First of all these brethren make the claim that it is not possible for Christ to live in his people because he is presently in heaven, ministering in the heavenly sanctuary (they also apply this limitation to the Father). According to their ideas, even God cannot be literally in two places at the same time and they conclude that this belief leads to pantheism, the doctrine that God is in everything and everything is God. Of course, God himself makes the claim that he is omnipresent, that he is everywhere at the same time. This is one of the most prominent teachings of the Bible:

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. (Jer 23:24)

However, these brethren conclude that it is not God himself who is actually filling heaven and earth, but that he is present by a “representative,” whom they label as “the third person of the godhead,” and who, many conclude, is not God himself, but an indefinable agency from God. Others who are more bold, or more reckless, conclude that this “third person” really is a title which applies to the angels of God who go back and forth all over the universe doing the bidding of God. Whatever the explanation, the bottom line is a denial of the truth that God and Jesus do literally dwell in their people.

WHAT IS THE SPIRIT?

One of the reasons for this strange denial is ignorance of what the spirit of God really is and this is based on a general ignorance of what a person’s spirit is. According to the Bible, a person’s spirit is an integral part of his being, inseparably bound up with the person so that it is impossible to separate them, until a person is dead. It is more than simply the thoughts of a person, more than simply the attitudes and

personality of a person. It is a very real component which is actually the true essence of the person himself as the following verses very clearly demonstrate.

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (1Cor 5:5)

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (Jas 2:26)

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (Acts 7:59)

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. (2Tim 4:22)

Notice that in all these verses the spirit is represented as being the essential element of the person. It is the thing that will be saved, it is the element that determines whether a person is alive or dead, it is the part that is preserved by God to be revived in the resurrection and it is the part of our being where Christ himself is joined to us. The spirit is the essential element of a person’s identity and this can be demonstrated very simply: When the Son of God came to earth, he came as a fetus in a woman’s belly. He left his knowledge, his awareness, his personality, his bodily form behind. If he left all these things behind, put them away and created a new life and identity as a human being, then in what sense can we say that Jesus was the same person that had lived in heaven from all eternity as the Son of God? He was the same being because it was his **spirit** that came to dwell in the human body in Mary’s belly! The element that made him the same person, even though he had a different personality, was his spirit. This is what was transferred from heaven to Mary’s belly, everything else was gone. The Bible says,

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (Heb 10:5)

The body was not the son of God, even the personality that he developed as a man was not the son of God. The Son

of God was the **spirit** that came to inhabit the body that had been prepared.

So then, we can understand that the spirit of God is not simply an “agency” sent by God. The spirit of God is an aspect of God himself – in fact it is the essential aspect of God’s being. If a person is separated from his spirit he is dead and God without his spirit is not God. As Jesus himself told us,

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

So the spirit of God is God himself and the spirit of Christ is Christ himself in the same way that my spirit is me, myself. It is not possible to separate a person from his spirit unless the person is dead. This is what happened to Jesus in the moment of his death.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:46)

So it is absolutely contrary to the Scriptures to identify the spirit of God as a “third person,” or an independent “agency,” distinct from God and Jesus, and it is even more ridiculous to suggest that the spirit of God refers to angels!

WORDS & SPIRIT

In John 6:63 Jesus made a statement which has been misunderstood and misrepresented by some. He said,

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)

This statement has led to the other erroneous conclusion that the spirit equates to the words of a person, to their mental disposition. Since the words of Christ arose from the mind of Christ, the conclusion is that the words carry his spirit, his way of thinking, his thoughts, and that it is through his words that Christ lives in his people. But as we have seen the spirit is much more than that. Typically, those who hold to this belief will explain that when we receive the words of Christ those words will affect the way we think, will work

on our personality and as we respond to them, we will become more like Christ. According to them, this is how we are born again and this is how Christ lives in his people. Not as a person, not as a living being, but by enabling us to think like him, through the agency of his words.

But again, the Scripture is very clear on this point as well. As a person receives and believes his words, such a person will receive the faith to enable him to receive Christ himself. The life is not in the words, but in Christ. The words are only an agency for creating faith (Rom 10:17), but that faith must go on to take hold of Christ himself.

CHRIST HIMSELF

In John 7:37-39, Jesus spoke of the coming of the holy spirit using the symbol of flowing water:

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:38-39)

This verse alone should settle the issue even if there were no others. Here it tells us that the holy spirit was **not yet given!** If this applied to the words of Jesus or any other words, then this verse would be meaningless. The words of Jesus had been present ever since he began his ministry, and in fact, even from the Old Testament times when he led Israel. But this passage makes us understand that the coming of the holy spirit was not the coming of words or of angels, it was the coming of Jesus himself to dwell in his people. This occurred at Pentecost and this extraordinary event could not take place until Jesus was glorified.

When John spoke of the future ministry of Jesus Christ he expressed it as a ministry in which he would baptize his people with the holy ghost and fire:

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose

shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: (Matt 3:11)

In no way could we construe this to mean that he would baptize his people with “words” or with “angels.” This was literally fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the church was filled with the power of God which came upon the believers in the visible form of tongues of fire. The result was that they all began to speak with other languages – languages which they had never studied, which they had not capability to understand before that moment. This was not angels speaking through them, this was not their mental state being altered by reading or remembering the words of Christ. This was the infusion of a supernatural life, the impartation of information, abilities, power that existed nowhere else but in Christ himself. This was Christ coming into his kingdom, the glorified Christ returning to live in his people.

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. (Acts 3:12-13)

As a man, it was not possible for Jesus to be in more than one place at a time, he was not omnipresent. Even when he returned to heaven, something had to happen to him first before he received this ability. He had to be glorified, he had to be filled with the spirit of God, united to God in such a way that all the powers and abilities of God flowed through him, so with this ability, he was now able to be in all places at the same time. He now had the ability to extend his own person into each of his people in all parts of the world and even the universe. In his last conversation with his disciples Jesus tried to explain this to them and even though he had to speak to them in parables, they eventu-

ally understood what he was saying.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:22-23)

Jesus declared that the comforter that he would send was already dwelling with them, but in the future, he would be in them. No longer on the outside, but on the inside. It is very clear that he was speaking of himself and when the disciples inquired further, seeking clearer understanding, he told them plainly, “my father and I will come and make our home with the one who loves me and keeps my words.” Keeping the words of Jesus would result in Jesus and God coming to live in such a person. Jesus, the comforter who they knew face to face, a living person, would be with them in a new way, living on the inside, in their spirits. The Bible is so clear on this matter that it is amazing that anyone should believe otherwise. In Ephesians 4:10 it tells us,

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) (Eph 4:10 NIV)

The NIV expresses the truth in plainer words than the KJV so I have quoted it here. The KJV says “that he might fill all things,” but the NIV highlights the meaning by stating, “in order to fill the whole universe.” Jesus returned to heaven, was glorified in order that the victory which he had accomplished on earth, the perfect life which he had created in himself, might be passed on to his people. The only way he could do

this was by being able to be everywhere at the same time, to be himself, the very life in his people. It is only as Christ himself lives again, in us, that we can live holy lives, none of us is, or can be righteous in himself. None of us has the capability of living a righteous life, in himself. It is only Christ who has that ability and it is as we allow him into our lives that he will live again in us, just as he lived here on earth in bodily form many years ago. The difference is that at that time it was his own body, this time it is in my body, by my permission. Amazing!

ANGELS' MINISTRY

The Bible does teach that God works to preserve, safeguard and bless his people through the ministry of angels.

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Heb 1:13-14)

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. (Ps 34:7)

In fact, God does the same thing through the ministry of those who are his children. It is God's method to work through an agency because in this way, God gives others the privilege of working along with him and additionally, it means that everything which he does is transparent and involves witnesses. We have been ordained and chosen to preach the good news to others despite the fact that God could do it much better through angels, or even simply through using his own power, independent of human involvement. But it is God's appointed way of accomplishing his purposes so, whenever there is somebody who is open to receive salvation, or who needs a miraculous intervention, God will send one of his children to be a vessel through whom he will work.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto

the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

But does it mean that God is limited to working only through angels and humans? Are we to conclude that because angels are with us and protect us, God himself is not also with us personally, and even living in us personally? Does this mean that because God works through angels they are described as "the holy spirit?" Does it mean that they are a "third person," in the godhead? If this were so then we might very well also say that we also are the holy spirit because God works through us also! We might very well say that we are the "third person" of the godhead



because his spirit is in us and his power flows through us! But though God works through us as he works through angels, this in no way entitles either Christians or angels to receive the title of "holy spirit." The holy spirit is the very essence of the life and person of God flowing through his son Jesus Christ. Nobody and nothing else is entitled to bear the title of "the spirit of God." We are the sons of God because we possess his spirit, his life in us, our fellowship is with God and his Son. Let nobody remove this wonderful blessing from us and attempt to replace it with the ministry of angels!

IT CANNOT BE ANGELS

The final, decisive evidence is Jesus' promise to send another comforter, one like himself to be always with his people. There is no reasonable way that one could conclude that this comforter is an angel, or a group of angels. Jesus said of this comforter, "he dwelleth

with you and shall be in you."

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17)

Somebody might say that this comforter was a special angel who was at the time present with them, but note - Jesus said in the future he would be **in them!** God has never given angels a ministry of living **inside** of his people. The only time that we find angels living inside people is when people are devil possessed! At such times fallen angels take control of the bodies of people by force. This is not the way of God and he has never commissioned his angels to act in such a way. The only being who can live inside another being without forcefully entering and hijacking the person's mind and faculties, is God himself, through his spirit, no other being has that capability.

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (2Cor 6:16)

Our bodies are the temples of the living God, not the temples of angels. In this statement the apostle Paul is taking our minds back to what happened during Old Testament times when the presence of God was manifested in the most holy place of the sanctuary. God instructed the Hebrews to make images of angels in the curtains of the sanctuary and they were to carve two golden angels on the top of the mercy seat. However, God himself was the only living presence inside that sanctuary. His presence was visible as a light shining between the two carved angels on the mercy seat. The presence was not the angels, it was the shekinah light, the symbol of God's very presence in that temple.

Continued on page 12

Optimize Your Circadian Rhythm

Lenworth Frankson



WHAT IS THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM?

The Circadian Rhythm is sometimes called the “body clock” which is about 24 hours long. All life, even the simplest, has a circadian rhythm of the same duration. This daily cycle influences brain-wave activity patterns, cell repair, and hormone levels. Most people feel tired at night and hungry at lunchtime. This is because our bodies have this built-in process that regulates sleep, hunger, and energy levels. Although the cycle can be affected by artificial lights or travel, unless there is a health issue, our 24-hour clock always resets itself in time. We share this rhythm with all life on earth, from plants to animals, and even bacteria. It affects more than just sleep and hunger. Nearly every cell in your body has its own circadian clock, which regulates the activation and deactivation of genes. For optimum health, it is important to pay attention to patterns of waking, sleeping and eating.

INSULIN RESISTANCE

Sleeping less than six hours a night dramatically increases our risk of insulin resistance, which is at the core of most chronic diseases. Insulin resistance is simply the resistance to the hormone insulin which results in the increasing of one’s blood sugar. Insulin helps control the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood. With insulin resistance, the

body's cells do not respond normally to insulin. Glucose cannot enter the cells as easily, so it builds up in the blood. This can eventually lead to type 2 diabetes.

UNDER GENETIC CONTROL

A few years ago three biologists were awarded the Nobel Prizes for their discovery of “master genes” that control your body's circadian rhythms. As mentioned earlier, almost every cell in our body has its own clock. In every cell, the clock regulates a different set of genes, telling them when to turn on and when to turn off. As a result, almost every hormone in your body, every brain chemical, every digestive juice and every organ that you can think of, operates on a rhythm where its core function rises and falls at certain times of the day in a coordinated fashion.

For example, your growth hormone might rise in the middle of the night, in the middle of sleep. At the same time, if there is not too much food in your stomach, then the stomach lining will start to repair. For that repair to work perfectly, the growth hormone from the brain has to coincide with the stomach repair time. Different rhythms in different parts of our body have to work together for the entire body to work optimally. In fact, to have these daily rhythms, sleep-wake cycles, being more alert in the morning, the bowel movement at the right time and having better muscle tone in the afternoon are credits to the fountain of health. These are the indications of health!

DISRUPTED BY SHIFT WORK

Attempting to micromanage this intricately timed system from the outside would be nonproductive. What is important is to pay attention and honor our patterns of waking, sleeping and eating. By doing this, the body more or less takes care of itself automatically. To support these daily rhythms that are

so ingrained in our body, we have to do a few things: sleep at the right time, eat at the right time, and get an adequate amount of sunlight during the daytime. We can do very simple things to reap the benefits of the circadian rhythm and the wisdom of our body.

One of the most common circadian oddities in today's modern world is shift work. I am referring to work that disrupts one's natural circadian rhythm by working nights. This would be any work that requires you to stay awake for three hours or more between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. for more than 50 days a year. The fact that about one in every four persons is exposed to this circadian rhythm irregularity is bad, but in addition to that, there are the health effects of dirty electricity and the unhealthy light spectrum emitted by pulsing light-emitting diodes (LED) and fluorescent lighting, which further worsen the problem.

Scientists are now getting a better understanding of the impact of light on our health. It was thought that lighting is only for vision and that our eyes just have retinal cone cells. Later however, it was discovered that the eyes have blue light-sensing light receptors called melanopsin.

These light-sensing cells in the retina, 5,000 of them per eye, are hardwired to many parts of the brain, including the master clock in the hypothalamus, and the pineal gland that makes melatonin (*Melatonin is a natural product found in plants and animals. It is primarily known in animals as a hormone released by the pineal gland in the brain at night, and has long been associated with control of the sleep-wake cycle-Wikipedia.*) We now have to think about lighting for health; We have to think about the effects of blue light. We need more blue light during the daytime, and less, at least four hours, before going to bed.

CHRONIC SLEEP DISRUPTION

We know that staying awake for three to four hours or even eating at the wrong time, when we should be sleeping, can result in irritation, a foggy brain, mild anxiety, loss of productivity and even insomnia. This could result in the flaring up of underlying autoimmune diseases. If we could make a list of diseases that circadian rhythm disruption contributes to, it would be a long one. The list would include diseases from mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disease, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and fatty liver disease.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEAL TIMING

Meal timing has a significant impact on your circadian rhythm. Many organs need between 12 and 16 hours of rest, which would mean a minimum of 12 hours without food, to allow for repair. We know that our circadian rhythm regulates our sleep-wake cycle, and every physiological function in our body. Health science is now showing a new form of intermittent fasting that aims to work with this process, by restricting our eating window during the day to align with the circadian rhythm, and when our bodies are optimized for functions such as digestion and fat burning. The results are said to include everything from weight loss to reduced cholesterol levels and lower blood pressure.

THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM DIET?

When we eat is as important as what we eat. This is because our metabolism actually changes throughout the day because of our circadian rhythm. Eating out of sync with your circadian rhythm can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and being overweight. However, by aligning our food with our circadian rhythm, we can help maximize weight loss, energy and our overall health.

To align our food with our circadian rhythm we have to start with the sun. The sun sets our circadian rhythm. This

rhythm expects us to eat during the day when the sun is shining and fast during the night. In fact, some fascinating research has found that calories eaten in the morning might not actually count as much as those eaten at night. Human studies have also shown that people who eat most of their calories before 3 p.m. tend to lose more weight than people who eat most of their calories later.

This synchronized eating has three simple rules.

1. Eat with the sun.

Eat only when the sun is up, since this is when your body wants you to eat. Ideally, that's about 12 hours between your last meal of the day and the first of the next day. Stretching this "fasting" window out to 14 or 16 hours is even better since you would be sleeping most of the time.

2. More early and less later.

Make breakfast and lunch your biggest meals of the day, and dinner the smallest. Ideally you should get about 75 percent of your nutrition before 3 p.m.

3. Eat dinner for breakfast or lunch.

Try eating dinner foods for breakfast or lunch. You will probably find yourself feeling more satisfied, more energetic and less hungry throughout the day.

In summary, although you won't hear it tick, your body has an amazing clock system built inside. The physical and mental changes it causes are called circadian rhythms. Most living things have them, including animals, plants, and even some germs. Circadian rhythms affect our sleep patterns as well as other ways our body works, like your hormones, body temperature, and even eating habits. When these rhythms get out of sync, they can easily cause problems with our health. Circadian rhythms have been linked to different disorders including diabetes, obesity and depression. To maximize on good health and sleep, it is important to know what keeps our body's clock on track and what might throw its rhythm off.

Personally, I look for the day when the

great controversy between good and evil has ended and there is no more sickness and sin. I look for the day when the entire universe is pure and clean and one pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation of Jehovah.



Christian Unity

AT Jones

Christian Unity is always among the Christian things that are of the greatest importance. Yet while Christian Unity is *in itself* of great importance, to know what *it is*, is of greater importance. This is because to desire, and to strive for, and to promote, *as Christian Unity* what is not *Christian Unity* at all is a most dangerous mistake and an immense loss. Much of just this has been done, and much of it is being done just now as a part of the several great "movements" in and by the churches that are now being urged.

In studying Christian Unity for what it really is, it will be helpful first of all plainly to state what *it is not*. One of the clearest expressions of what *it is not* is the following prodigiously false statement of what it is:

"1. Unity of *doctrine* and *faith*, which consists in the common accord of all the Faithful in admitting and believing all that the teaching church proposes to them as revealed or confirmed by Jesus Christ.

"2. Unity of *government*, which produces unity of communion, and which consists in the submission of all the Faithful to their respective bishops and in particular to the Roman Pontiff, supreme Head of the church."

Yet utterly false and Romish as all of that is, take away from it only the part that pertains to "the Roman Pontiff," and it fairly expresses the view of every denomination in the world as to what is Christian Unity. But

Christian Unity is altogether another thing than is any of that; and is as far higher than all of that as Heaven is higher than the earth.

Uniting of Christians upon *doctrine*, is not Christian Unity. Agreement of Christians in *belief*, is not Christian Unity. Uniting or agreeing of Christians upon a *platform* or statement of belief, or of doctrine, or of principles, is not Christian Unity. Uniting of Christians in an agreed assent and submission to an order of church organization or *church-government*, is not Christian Unity. Union of purpose or of effort of Christians or among Christians *in promoting a cause*, is not Christian Unity. Free and pleasant fraternal *association* of Christians, is not Christian Unity.

Christians might have *all* of these things in one combination, indeed many of them do, and yet not have

Christian Unity at all. Christian Unity is far more and far higher than is any association or denomination or federation or council even of *all the Christians in the world* for any purpose or upon any platform or in any cause or in submission to any church-government. And it is so well worth having that it is worth more than all other things put together.

Come then, let us know what *it is* in its pure truth and splendid worth, and then let us have it for all that it is worth.

. . . . there is an essential that should first be considered: and not only first, but first and last and all the time. That essential is, *The Place of the Holy Spirit*.

AT Jones - Extract from, "This is the Church"



Christ or Angels?

Continued from page 9

This is what Paul alludes to when he says, "ye are the temple of the living God." We are the place where God dwells not through angels, but himself, the living shekinah.

We are living today in the age of the New Covenant, in a time when our privileges are greater than those who lived in the age before Christ. If in those times of the Old Covenant they had the privilege of God's presence manifested in a temple made of animal skins, then how much more in the gospel age should we expect the living presence of God in our bodies which are declared to be his true temple! This is what he declares to be the truth and this is what we should believe and experience.



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